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**Summary of the Dairy Farm Preservation Act
Signed As Chapter 310 of the Acts of 2008**

Background

The Dairy Farm Revitalization Task Force submitted its report to the Legislature in November 2007. From that report legislation was drafted and worked its way through the legislature. The Legislature passed the Dairy Farm Preservation Act and Governor Patrick signed the Act in law on August 14, 2008 as [Chapter 310 of the Acts of 2008](#). Implementation of the various programs in the Act may take up to 6 to nine months to fully implement.

Key Features of the Dairy Farm Preservation Act

- Farm Linked Loan Program: establishes a low interest farm loan program in the Department of Agricultural Resources (DAR) that offers low-interest four-year loans of up to \$500,000 to eligible farms.
- Dairy Farm Income Tax Credit: establishes a dairy farm income tax credit that offers dairy farms an income tax credit for production in any month when the farm price for milk falls below a "trigger" price. Such a trigger price will be established by DAR and will reflect costs of production. Farms receive the credit when they file their tax return.
- Extension of Farm Viability Funds to APR Farms: allows Farm Viability funds to be offered to APR farms
- Dairy Promotion Board: establishes a Massachusetts Dairy Promotion Board to promote the consumption of milk and milk products. Farmers will be assessed 10 cents per cwt for the Board to use for program activities. Farmers will be able to receive the credit for the 10 cents from the National Promotion assessment if they choose;
- Local Option to Exempt from Personal Property Tax farm animals and equipment used solely for agricultural production: allows towns to exempt farms from personal property tax on farm animals and equipment used exclusively for agricultural production; this exemption must be adopted by the town by a two-thirds vote;
- Alters the distance a farm vehicle may travel on roads without a registration from 2 miles to 10 miles;
- Provides the Department authority allow fluid milk couponing under certain conditions: gives DAR authority to allow and regulate the use couponing of fluid milk to promote the increase in fluid milk consumption The DAR must protect local producer dealers from predatory pricing;
- Establishes a Commission to study the legal barriers to the adoption of new farm technology: this eight-member commission must review laws and regulation and make recommendations to the legislature for changes to remove barriers to the adoption of new technologies. The Commission will consist of 3 dairy farmers, the Commissioner of DAR, the Commissioner of DEP, the Commissioner of DOR, the Commissioner of DPH, and a member of the Massachusetts Technology Collaborative.